

SPOONERISTIC VARIATIONS

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A plethora of spoonerisms has appeared in Word Ways over many years. A spoonerism is the result of exchanging the initial letter(s) of a pair of words to make another pair of words. BASKET CASE - CASKET BASE, MATCHING HAT - HATCHING MAT and FAKE LOG - LAKE FOG are examples. Sometimes the two word pairs are related (MINGY STAN - STINGY MAN). They may even follow on one from the other, as do MISSED HOLE - HISSED MOLE. A variation of the basic spoonerism is the homophonic spoonerism. These are less restrictive and include at least one letter/letter group which is replaced by a different letter/letter group having the same sound, as in DOLE QUEUE - COAL DUE (see also Word Ways 2001224). Whatever the type, spoonerisms are pleasing to the ear because the ends of the words have the same sound thus retaining a double rhyme.

A pair of words has four 'ends' - two beginnings and two ends. By exchanging different initial and terminal combinations, or their homophonic equivalents, the double rhyme end can be replaced by a single rhyme end, by a single rhyme beginning, and then disappear altogether. Examples of these 3 categories are given below. Those in which the two word pairs are related, or follow on, are *italicised*.

The exchange combinations are:

1. *the end of the 1st word with the beginning of the 2nd word*

The result is slightly stilted but the two 2nd words still rhyme.

CUP TIE	SAT DOWN	STORM SAIL	MOD CONS	CHES CLUB	<i>MALE DOVE</i>
CUT PIE	SAD TOWN	STORES MAIL	MOCK DONS	CHECK SLUB	<i>MADE LOVE</i>

2. *the beginning of the first word with the end of the 2nd word*

Now the result is noticeably more stilted because only the two 1st words rhyme.

<i>GOT STAN</i>	STILL ROOM	COACH TRIP	THROW BACK	LAPSE RATE	TOAST RACK
<i>NOT STAG</i>	MILL ROOST	POACH TRICK	CROW BATH	TAPS RAIL	COAST RAT

3. *the end of the first word with the end of the 2nd word*

All rhyming has now been lost.

BAY TRAIL	CAT FLAP	TAX BRAIN	<i>TINY SHOE</i>	MAY CALLS	<i>WE SIGHT</i>
BAIL TRAY	CAP FLAT	TRAIN BACKS	<i>TOO SHINY</i>	MAULS KAY	<i>WHITE SEA</i>

SPOONER'S TRIPLETS

Back to spoonerisms proper. Why stop at word pairs? Here, the initial letters/sounds of a word trio are exchanged on a sliding, circular basis, either clockwise or anticlockwise. It's not easy!

MAX FELS TREE	WYN SENT MILLY	GILL WAITS HERE
FAX TELLS ME	MIN WENT SILLY	HILL GATES WEIR
TAX MEL'S FEE	CYN MEANT WILLY	WILL HATES GEAR

Can any Word Ways' reader construct a Spooner's Quadruplet?